

# Funding the Gearing Up for Kindergarten Program

Gearing Up for Kindergarten is a school readiness and parent education program. This document outlines various possibilities and resources available to districts and schools for funding a Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. The resources in this document could be used to fund the program or to supplement the amount of funds received through the NDSU Extension Service for costs such as materials and snacks.

## **State Funds**

The North Dakota State Legislative Assembly appropriates funding to the NDSU Extension Service to help support the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.

Since these funds flow through the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI), but are administered through NDSU, there are no additional federal requirements that must be adhered to, making it an ideal funding source for districts. However, since the amount appropriated probably cannot serve all North Dakota schools, some schools and districts may need to look for other sources of funding to implement a Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.

## **Federal Title Funds**

- **Title I** – Title I funds can be used for the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program in Title I buildings. Schoolwide programs could serve all students and parents. Targeted assistance programs could only serve at-risk students and their parents as identified through a selection process. All Title I rules and regulations would still need to be followed in regard to the program.
- **Title I Parent Involvement Set Aside** – If a district's Title I allocation is \$500,000 or more, then they are required to set aside 1% of their district's Title I allocation for parent involvement. Only 5% of these funds may be used at the district level, 95% must be given to the participating schools. Districts must document on their consolidated application that they have reserved, at a minimum, the 1% for parent involvement and specifically outline how these funds will be spent. These funds are ideal to help support the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.
- **Title I – Program Improvement 10% Set-Aside for Professional Development** – A school or district identified for program improvement (during years 1 and 2) must spend not less than 10% of the district's/school's allocation of Title I A funds for the purpose of

providing high-quality professional development that directly addresses the academic achievement problems that caused the identification. Since this is a parent training program, these set-aside funds for professional development could be used to pay the stipends for teachers to provide training to parents, as well as other costs to support the training aspects of a Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.

- Title II A – Title II A funds designated for professional development could be used to support professional development in the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.
- REAP (Rural Education Achievement Program Initiative) – These funds target small rural districts. Eligible school districts are allowed to combine the funding under the federal Title programs and can use these funds for any authorized activity. If your district is eligible, funds can be REAPed into Title I to support the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. All Title I rules and regulations would still need to be followed in regard to the program.
- Transferability – These funds target larger urban districts. If your district is eligible, funds can be transferred into Title I and used to support the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program. All Title I rules and regulations would still need to be followed in regard to the program.
- Program Improvement Funds – Schools in program improvement may receive additional funds to help them make adequate yearly progress. Using these additional program improvement dollars to support the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program would be an allowable use of the funds. In particular, elementary schools may want to pursue this.
- Small Rural Schools Achievement Program Funds through REAP – Eligible schools can apply for these additional funds directly through the U.S. Department of Education. These funds can be used for authorized activities under the Title programs and can support any of the supplemental activities under the federal programs, including the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.
- Reallocated Title I Funds – These funds are available to school districts that would like to add to their Title I program, but need additional funds to accomplish their plan. The funds must supplement your current local and Title I budget. These funds are made available in September and could be used to support any additional activity that will enhance services for Title I students.

### **Other Options**

- Pool Your Resources – In North Dakota, it is becoming quite common for districts to cooperate and share services. Federal regulations allow school districts to pool their resources to share services among several schools. One district would simply agree to be the fiscal agent and the funds would flow through that district to pay for the shared

activities. Several area districts close in proximity could pool their funds to support the Gearing Up for Kindergarten program.

- Another viable option would be to share resources through your local Regional Educational Association (REA).
- Gifted funds specifically for the program (e.g., gifts from community, trust fund from former student)
- Granted funds specifically for the program (e.g., fundraisers)
- Local United Way
- Tuition (i.e., parents pay a fee for the program)
- Donations specifically for the program (e.g., organized donations from city)

This information, as well as other early childhood information, can be found online at [www.ag.ndsu.edu/gearupforkindergarten](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/gearupforkindergarten).